

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims and replaces all earlier listings and all earlier versions.

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:  
histogram calculation means for calculating a histogram that is consonant with an input image;  
binary threshold value calculation means for calculating a binary threshold value, based on ~~said~~ the histogram, with which a predetermined area in ~~said~~ the input image is blurred;  
binarization means for binarizing ~~said~~ the input image using ~~said~~ the binary threshold value; and  
calculation means for calculating the color of ~~said~~ the predetermined area of ~~said~~ the input image based on the results obtained by said binarization means.

2. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein, by referring to a binary image obtained by said binarizing means, said calculation means calculates the average value of portions in ~~said~~ the input image that correspond to black portions of ~~said~~ the binary image, and calculates the color of a predetermined area of ~~said~~ the input image based on ~~said~~ the average value.

3. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein, by referring to a binary image obtained by said binarizing means, said

calculation means calculates a histogram for portions in ~~said~~ the input image that correspond to black portions of ~~said~~ the binary image, and calculates the color of a predetermined area of ~~said~~ the input image based on ~~said~~ the histogram.

4. (Original) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said binarizing means further includes inversion means for inverting the binarized results.

5. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the image in ~~said~~ the predetermined area is a symbol image.

6. (Currently Amended) An image processing method comprising:  
a histogram calculation step of calculating a histogram that is consonant with an input image;  
a binary threshold value calculation step of calculating a binary threshold value, based on ~~said~~ the histogram, with which a predetermined area in ~~said~~ the input image is blurred;  
a binarization step of binarizing ~~said~~ the input image using ~~said~~ the binary threshold value; and  
a calculation step of calculating the color of ~~said~~ the predetermined area of ~~said~~ the input image based on the results obtained ~~[[by]]~~ at said binarization ~~means~~ step.

7. (Currently Amended) An image processing method according to claim 6, wherein, by referring to a binary image obtained at said binarizing step, at said calculation step, the average value of portions in ~~said~~ the input image that correspond to black portions of ~~said~~ the binary image is calculated, and the color of a predetermined area of ~~said~~ the input image is calculated based on ~~said~~ the average value.

8. (Currently Amended) An image processing method according to claim 6, wherein, by referring to a binary image obtained at said binarizing step, at said calculation step, a histogram for portions in ~~said~~ the input image that correspond to black portions of ~~said~~ the binary image is calculated, and the color of a predetermined area of ~~said~~ the input image is calculated based on ~~said~~ the histogram.

9. (Original) An image processing method according to claim 6, wherein said binarizing step further includes an inversion step of inverting the binarized results.

10. (Currently Amended) An image processing method according to claim 6, wherein the image in ~~said~~ the predetermined area is a symbol image.

11. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium on which stored is a program comprising:

a code for calculating a histogram that is consonant with an input image;

a code for calculating a binary threshold value, based on ~~said~~ the histogram,  
with which a predetermined area in ~~said~~ the input image is blurred;

a code for binarizing ~~said~~ the input image using ~~said~~ the binary threshold  
value; and

a code for calculating the color of ~~said~~ the predetermined area of ~~said~~ the  
input image based on the results obtained ~~[[by]]~~ at said binarization ~~means~~.

12. (Canceled)